

Lady Cove Women's Choir strides onto the world stage

Lady Cove Women's Choir is one of twenty-five choral ensembles in the world – and the only one from Canada -- chosen to participate in the 9th World Symposium on Choral Music in Puerto Madryn, Argentina, in August 2011.

As part of the symposium, Lady Cove Women's Choir will perform two concerts and also present a multimedia lecture-recital in which the choir will explore how a choral community can be a new and powerful vehicle for the preservation, transmission, and re-visioning of a traditional culture.

Lady Cove has also been invited to present this lecture-recital as joint venture of Festival 500's International Symposium and the World Conference of The International Council for Traditional Music in St. John's, July 2011.

"We are very happy and honored to have been asked to participate in both events," said Kellie Walsh, Lady Cove's choral director. "All three opportunities are international events and we are proud that Lady Cove's work is proving to have resonance on the world stage. We have a story to tell, and we feel Lady Cove, a story in itself, is also a very effective way for the stories of the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador to be told."

"The recital begins with the choir exploring the heritage of the people and the province, a place that has always deeply valued the vibrancy of storytelling and music-making," Ms. Walsh said. "Lady Cove's choral director. "The repertoire will include folk music that has been revived and arranged and will vividly demonstrate our unique connection to our physical place."

Ms. Walsh said that the presentation will demonstrate that Lady Cove is envisioning a new tradition - about dynamic, committed community building, supported by telling stories in the tradition of the past while creating new repertoire, thoughtfully looking to new audiences, and seeking new ways of stimulating the memories of the people in our province and around the world.

"The second, and perhaps most compelling part of the lecture recital will explore the notion of a choir's capacity to contribute to the ongoing evolution of a culture," Ms. Walsh said. "The collapse of the North Atlantic cod fishery in the early 1990s changed the face of our province forever. We are now a people who are exploring and benefiting from the oil industry and other new resource-based industries. In a newly prosperous society, we are aware that traditional culture is at risk. We find ourselves asking the question: How can our vibrant traditions be translated so that they remain relevant in the complex, rapidly changing social environment of the 21st century?"

Lady Cove is committed to thoughtfully contributing to the development of culture with every generation - a culture that is immersed in and informed by the traditions of the past, but is far from stagnant. In the last three years Lady Cove has commissioned new works for women's voices from composers ranging from students of composition to internationally renowned composers such as Imant Raminsh and James Rolfe.

For each commission the composer was asked to use the poetry of a Newfoundland writer or a writer who has been inspired by the province. The results are new and exciting contributions to Canadian choral music based on texts that are distinctly of this place and of our culture. In November 2009, Lady Cove commissioned poet laureate Agnes Walsh to write a poem for Lady Cove Women's Choir. The commissioned poem is informed by both Lady Cove the place (a small community in Newfoundland), as well as Lady Cove the choir, resulting in a work that will reflect how our identity as a choral community is linked to our place. This poem as well as the works we have recently commissioned will be presented as part of the recital.

Lady Cove Women's Choir is named after the community of Lady Cove in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador. Based in St. John's, the Choir of over 40 voices was established by Kellie Walsh in September, 2003. In 2008 the Choir won first place in the CBC Radio Competition for Amateur Choirs in the Contemporary Music category and then took first place at the 2008 Bela Bartok New Music Competition in Debrecen, Hungary. Karen Kain, one of the leading classical ballerinas in the world, is Lady Cove's honorary patron.

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